

"WOODSTOCK"
South Spring Mill Road
Villanova
Radnor Township
Delaware County
Pennsylvania

HABS NO. PA-196

HABS
PA
23 VILLA
3-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
120 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

"WOODSTOCK"

Street Address: South Spring Mill Road, Villanova, Radner Township,
Delaware County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: Mrs. Thornton Oakley, address above

Present Occupant: Owner

Present Use: Residence

Brief Statement
of Significance: This building is an early fieldstone country house
dating from 1776, with an addition of c. 1800 (both
elements are in nearly the original state in every
detail) and an addition of 1931.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: 1776-1796, James Hunter; 1796-1805, James Hunter, Jr.; from 1805 to present date occupied by latter's sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Maskell Ewing, their children, grandchildren and great granddaughter, the present owner, Amy Ewing Oakley.
2. Date of erection: South section erected 1776 (date stone); north section erected c. 1800; kitchen and sleeping porch additions in 1931.
3. Architect, builder, suppliers etc.: Builder of c. 1800 section was probably Samuel Morgan, who in 1804 built the adjoining barn (see report on WOODSTOCK BARN). James Hunter for whom 1776 section was built and James Hunter, Jr., of c. 1800 were both widely read, educated men and may have made suggestions to the local builder; it seems certain that an architect was employed by the latter in c. 1807 for his subsequent residence (see report on CHUCKSWOOD).
4. Original plans, construction etc.: The 1776 section was built as a summer farmhouse by city merchant James Hunter, contiguous to the south wall of a small, crude house built by Caleb Evans from whom the 141 acre property was acquired in 1757. The Hunter house was of two rooms up and down with attic rooms as well. About 1800 (traditional date) James Hunter, Jr. tore down Evans house and erected the north section, also of two main rooms on each floor, putting kitchen in basement on east side.

"WOODSTOCK"

Page 2

5. Notes on alterations and additions: House had only a kitchen adjoining it to south and a bathroom on second floor added during 19th century. In 1931 architect George Bispham Page, with the collaboration of Thornton Oakley, artist husband of owner, designed present kitchen to north and sleeping porch to south (two stories high). Northeast parlor of 1800 now serves as dining room and basement kitchen of 1800 converted in 1940's into a basement gameroom.

Front door was originally on east wall (now a French window) facing a long since abandoned lane to Conestoga Road. 1800 front door remains such today.

Remarkably little alteration to house during nearly two centuries occupation by same family.

6. Important old views and references: Mrs. Thornton Oakley, present owner, has a half dozen photographs of Woodstock dating from 1860-1900 and a small oil painting of the 1850's by Robert Leaming. The architectural and genealogical data in the Ewing family papers has been investigated. Also, Francis James Dallett, "The Story of Woodstock," The Bulletin of Radnor Historical Society, Vol. I, No. 8 (Spring, 1958), pp. 3-11, for a detailed history of the ownership of the property, family and social events which took place in the house and mention of its early furnishings, many of which are in the house today.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Builder, James Hunter (1729-1796), born in Coleraine, co. Antrim, was Philadelphia drygoods merchant, who was an associator of the First Troop, Philadelphia City Cavalry and served as Second Corporal with this Light Horse unit in battles of Trenton and Princeton; in 1776 he was also Paymaster of the Fourth Pennsylvania Battalion. His son, James Hunter, Jr. (1772-1849) was a member of Philadelphia bar and the First City Troop. His son-in-law, Maskell Ewing (1758-1825), who later occupied Woodstock, was Clerk of the New Jersey Legislature in early life and served 1815-21 as member of Pennsylvania Senate.

Charles Thomson, first Secretary of the Continental Congress was often a visitor here. Members of the family who lived here were graduated from West Point, Princeton and the University of Pennsylvania and were active in business, social and civic affairs in Philadelphia and Radnor Township.

- C. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: Ewing family notebooks and papers relating to the farm, agricultural program, etc. The intact library of James Hunter might also provide further clues.

Prepared by F. J. Dallett Date June 1958
For Radnor Historical Society

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a typical fieldstone Pennsylvania country house, which dates from 1776 (with additions of c. 1800 and 1931) and retains much of its original detail.
2. Condition of fabric: Good condition

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: No information
2. Foundations: Stone
3. Wall construction: Fieldstone stuccoed over with pebble-dash and whitewashed. One story kitchen wing on north end and two story porch (enclosed above, arched and open below) on south end are of masonry stuccoed over and whitewashed.
4. Porches: Two-story porch on south designed in 1931 by architect George Bispham Page, with the collaboration of Thornton Oakley, artist husband of owner.
5. Chimneys: Three chimneys, of stone, all original. (one of 1776, two of c. 1800)
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Front door (c. 1800), eight panels and fan light, enclosed by triangular pediment and pilasters of wood. Rear door in same section is four panels. Original entrance on east wall in 1776 section is now a French door.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows nearly all original and shutters on outside are largely original or very old. Eighteen light windows in 1776 section; twelve light windows in 1800 section.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with asbestos shingles.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Simple molded box cornice is original.
 - c. Dormers: Four dormers in 1776 section of twelve lights; two dormers in c. 1800 section of twelve lights rising to fan tops of six sections.

C. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans:
First Floor: in 1776 section, 2 main rooms, original; in 1800 section, center hall and two main rooms. Kitchen and covered porch wings not included.
Second Floor: Four main rooms (two baths and enclosed porch not included).
Third (attic) Floor: Four main rooms plus bath.
2. Stairways: One, in center hall of 1800 section, original handcarved bannister and balustrade. Ivory button inset in top of newel post.
3. Flooring: Some old flooring, notably in southwest bedroom; most of it is nineteenth century flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered ceilings and walls, painted and/or papered.
5. Doorways and doors: Doors at each end of center hall, panelled in sections on exterior, have flush panels on interior. Others are simple wooden panelled doors. Stair-hall divided by elliptical archway trimmed with wood.
6. Trim: Stucco cornice in 1800 section; none in 1776 section.
7. Hardware: Nearly all old. Some fine original locks, bolts and hinges.
8. Lighting: Electricity
9. Heating: Fireplaces in all main rooms. Two plain gray and white Pennsylvania marble mantels in 1800 section, one in each room on ground floor; in 1776 section on ground floor and also second floor are two diagonal fireplaces faced with wood panelling and topped with a heavy double cornice of wood.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: In meadow with huge old shade trees at some distance. Hunter's Run, a stream, flows from spring rising behind house. High ground. The front door (c. 1800 side) faces west. The original entrance in 1776 faced east.
2. Enclosures: None
3. Outbuildings: Recent frame garage in poor condition.

"WOODSTOCK"

Page 5

4. Walks, driveways etc.: None of interest
5. Landscaping, gardens etc.: Simple lawn, a few flower beds. Rustic arbor frames rear door.

Prepared by F. J. Dallett Date June 1958
For Radnor Historical Society